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For more information, please contact:

Mike Wilpizeski at 718-459-2117

email: mikew@headsup.com

Jim Walsh at Big Hassle at (212) 202-0272

email: walsh@bighassle.com

Tour Publicity: **Kelly Johannis-DiCillo** at 216-464-2313 (ext. 247)

email: kjohannis@headsup.com

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ZAP MAMA MAKES MUSIC FOR CELEBRATION AND RENEWAL

ReCreation features guest appearances by Bilal, G. Love, actor Vincent Cassel

We live in challenging times. Economic, social and political forces in every part of our interconnected globe are triggering an unprecedented transformation in the way we govern, the way we do business, the way we interact and the way we live. For many of us, the challenges can be overwhelming. That's when it's time to look at ourselves, our relationships and the world as a whole from a new perspective.

Zap Mama has a plan. This multicultural musical entity led by Afropean vocalist and songwriter Marie Daulne is sending everyone on vacation, and the first and only item on the itinerary is *ReCreation* (HUCD 3159), their new album set for worldwide release on May 26, 2009, on Heads Up International, a division of Concord Music Group.

In addition to a rhythm section rooted in a rich Brazilian vibe, *ReCreation* also boasts a guest list of high-profile vocalists including Bilal, G. Love, actor Vincent Cassel (*La Haine*, *Ocean's Twelve*) and several others. The album offers everything the title suggests – a time to make a break, to renew, and to play. “That moment when you are relaxing and enjoying yourself,” says Daulne, “is the perfect moment to create a new person within yourself – to heal yourself and let go of all the negative aspects of your life. In those times when you relax, you recreate yourself.”

And in so doing, she says, we strengthen those longstanding relationships that are at the foundation of who we are. *ReCreation* is, among other things, Daulne's reaffirmation of the important ties that bind us all – parent and child, lover and friend, artist and audience, singer and song, human and universe. Although constantly evolving, these are the dynamics that connect us to our loved ones, our communities and to the world.

For Daulne, the *ReCreation* process started in Rio de Janeiro in May 2008, almost by accident. She traveled there from her home in Brussels, Belgium, to record a single track with the help of Cassel, her longtime friend. Making an entire album was nowhere in the original plan. “When I arrived in Brazil, I was hit with an explosion of inspiration,” she says. “Everything started to happen. There was the beach and the music and the sounds and the vibe all around me. Even the language was inspiring. It was then that I said, ‘Okay, I'm ready to make a new album. A work of art.’”

Thus, one song became thirteen. Recording took place at various points around the globe – Brazil, Belgium, New York and Boston and Los Angeles – through the summer and fall of 2008, with a string of summer tour dates in the midst of it all. Drummer Karriem Riggins added several tracks after the Brazil sessions with the help of engineer Russ Elevado (D'Angelo, Keziah Jones, Boney James), who unleashed his amazing array of analog equipment in the mixing process in L.A. Despite the intense pace, Daulne says the process was too exhilarating and inspiring to be considered strenuous.

ReCreation gets under way with the title track, a brief introduction that features vocals by Daulne's 15-year-old daughter, Kesia Quental Daulne. "She has the pure voice of a teenager who is still very naïve about life and the world," she says. "There's a fragility about her voice – something that hovers between a child-like innocence and a capacity for clear thinking and insight that borders on clairvoyance."

The upbeat and uptempo "Singing Sisters" is a treat for Zap Mama fans of old. The track is a reunion of Daulne with vocalists Sylvie Nawasadio and Sabine Kabongo – members of the group's original a cappella lineup in the early 1990s. "Sabine and Sylvie and I sang together on the first two GRAMMY®-nominated Zap Mama albums," says Daulne. "That was the original sound of Zap Mama music – pure voices used as instruments. I started my career with these two women – along with two others, Marie Cavenaile and Cecilia Kandonda. The five of us were like the five fingers of a hand – all individuals but all working as one. I still think of them as sisters. Fifteen years later, this original sound and period has been *recreated*."

Easygoing and melodic, "The Way You Are" is a duet with Bilal that examines romantic love, grownup-style. "It's not about falling in love, the way you do when you're a teenager" says Daulne. "It's about *standing* in love – sharing affection with someone but still being responsible for your own emotions."

"Paroles, Paroles," a duet recorded with Cassel in Brazil, is the track that launched the entire album. Originally written and recorded in the early 1970s, this is an Italian pop song (translated here to French) that Daulne remembers from her childhood in Brussels. The man in the song is attempting to charm the woman with empty compliments, but the woman dismisses it all as just words, words ("...paroles, paroles..."). "He is using sweet talk," Daulne explains. "But she says, 'All your words, all your talking, sounds like chocolates and sweets that are consumed so quickly. I cannot trust you, because your words sound like candy.'"

Cassel reappears in "Non, Non, Non," a different take on the inevitable tension between the sexes. "This is a song about flirting," she says. "The man is saying, 'Will you stay with me?' and the woman says, 'No, no, no...'. They want to be together but won't really take the plunge. He keeps asking her, 'Stay with me, stay a little longer.' It's about the flirtation with things that are forbidden."

Daulne shares vocals with G. Love on the aching and tense "Drifting," a story of what happens to a relationship when a man – a musician in this case – spends much of his time on the road. "This song was born in the middle of the night," Daulne recalls. "I woke up and I had this melody in my head. Everything was there – the melody, the beat, everything. It was not me who was composing. The song was given to me by some musical spirit. I just executed the order."

The album closes with the Afro-sounding "Chill Out," a song about a journey that has come to an end. Daulne already expects the song to take on a life of its own when she takes it on tour. "When we perform it live, it will be beautiful," she says. "I'm going to invite people to dance. When people come to a Zap Mama concert, they will learn how to dance."

The time to dance eclipses the time to mourn. Daulne acknowledges that Zap Mama's previous album, *Supermoon* (2007), was crafted with an undercurrent of sadness at the death of a close friend shortly before recording began, but **ReCreation** represents a new day – a happier one that bears a closer resemblance to the original brilliance of Zap Mama, and reflects the optimism of a new political and social climate around the world. "Sadness is a part of life," she acknowledges, "but this new record is about the joy that comes with being reborn. Even if you can't go on a holiday, you can listen to this album and feel renewed. This is how I want people to feel."

Hit the play button. Make a change. Re-experience the positive vibrations at the heart and root of Zap Mama's original vision. Enjoy some **ReCreation**.

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